MRS. ATHERTON WATCHED WAR EXALT FRENCH WOMANHOOD

Tells in New Book How Lilies of France Were Turned to Toiling and Spinning

There is an ancient superstition that it is unwise to bring out a thoughtful book in summer, the silly season, the season of light novels, and I was warned if I brought out The Living Present before the autumn—it being distinctly a "Fall Book"—it would be ignored.

However, I decided to do the uncommon thing on account of the uncommon times. The American people this summer are thinking harder than they have thought for many falls and many winters, and not only on the great world problem, but on their individual part in this war and in the vague, sinister future that will confront them after the war is over. And as many, no matter what their intelligence, are for the first really awake to the war and to that future of peace unlike any peace they have ever known, I decided, and my publishers with me, that any book which gave specific first hand accounts of what the women of an old military country like France were doing to checkmate the enemy and hasten peace—and they are playing a mighty part—would be welcome at any time. And so here it is.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

WITHOUT the help of the women France could not have remained in the field six months.

This war has been one of the greatest incentives to women in all the belligerent countries that have been known in the history of the world.

These are the statements of Gertrude Atherton. The distinguished American writer has just written a book, "The Living Present" (Stokes), presenting some of the war time achievements of French women, which will be an inspiration to the women of America in the present crisis.

The most astonishing stories are those about the sheltered and petted women of Paris, of the ornamental, "useless" type, who suddenly developed energy and executive ability, and who have performed invaluable service. Her inspiring account also touches on other phases of women's work in war time.

Mrs. Atherton went to France last summer to study the work of the French women. She says:

"My original intention was to remain in France for a month, gathering my material as quickly as possible, and then cross to England. I remained three months and a third in France—from May 9, 1916, to August 19. I remained in France so long because I was never so vitally interested in my life. I could not tear myself away, although I found it impossible to get my material into shape there."

One of the first things which impressed Mrs. Atherton was the quickening, in French women, of qualities so long dormant that they were hardly suspected.

"The French women of the middle and lower bourgeoisie and of the farms," she says, "stepped automatically into the shoes of the men called to the colors in August, 1914, and it was, in their case, merely the wearing of two pairs of shoes instead of one, and both of equal fit.

"The women of those clearly defined classes are their husbands' partners and coworkers, and although physically they may find it more wearing to do the work of two than of one it entails no particular strain on their mental faculties or change in their habits of life. Moreover, France since the dawn of her history has been a military nation, and generation after generation her women have been called upon to play their important role in war, although never on so vast a scale as now.

"To the student of French history and character nothing the French have done in this war is surprising. Nevertheless it seemed to me that I had a fresh revelation every day during my sojourn in France in the summer of 1916. Every woman of every class (with a few notable exceptions seen for the most part in the Ritz Hotel) was working at something or other; either in self-support, to relieve distress or to supplement the efforts and expenditures of the Government (two billion francs a month); and it seemed that I never should see the last of those relief organizations of infinite variety known as 'oeuvres.'"

To exemplify a type of creative personality which is accomplishing original and indispensable results Mrs. Atherton cites the case of Mme. Balli, the originator of the "comfort package."

A Butterfly Transformed.

"Up to the outbreak of the war Mme. Balli was a woman of the world, a woman of fashion to her finger tips, a reigning beauty, always dressed with a costly and exquisite simplicity. Some idea of the personal loveliness which, united to her intelligence and charm, made her one of the conspicuous figures of the capital may be inferred from the fact that her British husband, an art connoisseur and notable collector, was currently reported deliberately to have picked out the most beautiful girl in Europe to adorn his various mansions.

"Mme. Balli has black eyes and hair, a white skin, a classic profile and a smile of singular sweetness and charm. Until the war came she was far too absorbed in the delights of the world—the Paris world, which has more votaries than all the capitals of the world—the changing fashions and her social popularity to have heard so much as a murmur of the serious tides of her nature.

"Although no one disputed her intelligence—a social asset in France, odd as that may appear to Americans—she was generally put down as a mere femme du monde, self-indulgent, pleasure loving, dependent—what our more strident feminists call parasitic. It is doubtful if she belonged to charitable organizations, although, generous by nature, it is safe to say that she gave freely.

"In that terrible September week of 1914 when the Germans were driving like a hurricane on Paris and its inhabitants were fleeing in droves to the south Mme. Balli's husband was in England, a brother-in-law had his hands full and Mme. Balli was practically alone in Paris. Terrified of the struggling hordes about the railway stations even more than of the advancing Germans, deprived of her motor cars, which had been commandeered by the Government, she did not know which way to turn.

"But her brother-in-law suddenly bethought himself of this too lovely creature who would be exposed to the final horrors of recrudescent barbarism if the Germans entered Paris, he determined to put public demands aside for the moment and take her to Dinard, whence she could if necessary cross to England.

"He called her on the telephone and told her to be ready at a certain hour that afternoon, and with as little luggage as possible, as they must travel by automobile. 'And mark you,' he added, 'no dogs!' Mme. Balli had seven little Pekingese to which she was devoted.

"There were seven passengers in the automobile, however, of which the anxious driver, feeling his way through the crowded streets and apprehensive that his car might be impressed at any moment, had not a suspicion. They were in hat boxes, hastily perforated portmanteaux, up the coat sleeves of Mme. Balli and her maid, and they did not begin to yelp until so far on the road to the north that it was not worth while to throw them out.

The Germ of "Comfort Packages."

"At Dinard, where wounded soldiers were brought in on every train, Mme. Balli was turned over to friends, and in a day or two, being bored and lonely, she concluded to go with these friends to the hospitals and take cigarettes and smiles into the barren wards.

"From that day until I left Paris on the 17th of August, 1916, Mme. Balli had labored unceasingly; she is known to the Government as one of its most valuable and resourceful aids; and she works until 2 in the morning, during the quieter hours, with her correspondence and books, and she had not up to that time taken a day's rest. I have seen her so tired that she could hardly go on, and she said once quite pathetically, 'I am not even well groomed any more.' I used to beg her to go to Vichy for a fortnight, but she would not hear of it.

"One of her friends said to me: 'Helene must really be a tremendously strong woman. Before the war we all thought her a semi-invalid who pulled herself together at night for the opera, or dinners, or balls. But we didn't know her then, and sometimes we feel as if we knew her still less now.'

"It was Mme. Balli who invented the 'comfort package' which other organizations have since developed into the 'comfort bag,' and founded the œuvre known as 'Reconfort du Soldat.'

"I went with her one day to one of the éclopé stations and to the Dépôt des Isoles, outside of Paris, to help her distribute comfort packages—which, by the way, covered the top of the automobile and were piled so high inside that we disposed ourselves with some difficulty. The packages, all neatly tied and of varying sizes, were in the nature of surprise bags of an extremely practical order. Tobacco, pipes, cigarettes, chocolate, toothbrushes, soap, pocket knives, combs, safety pins, handkerchiefs, needles and thread, buttons, pocket mirrors, postcards, pencils, are a few of the articles I recall. The members of the committee meet at her house twice a week to do up the bundles, and her servants also do a great deal of the practical work.

For Men Returning to Front.

"The comfort packages are always given to the men returning to their regiments on that particular day. They are piled high on a long table at one side of the barrack yard, and behind it, on the day of my visit, stood Mme. Balli, Mrs. Allen, Mr. Holman-Black and myself, and we handed out packages with a 'Bonne chance' as the men filed by. Some were sullen and unresponsive, but many more looked as pleased as children and no doubt were as excited over their 'grabs,' which they were not to open until in the train. They would face death on the morrow, but for the moment, at least, they were personal and titillated.

"Chaptal and Villemin are only two of Mme. Balli's hospitals. I believe she visits others, carrying gifts to both the men and the kitchens, but the only other of her works that I came into personal contact with was an œuvre she had organized to teach convalescent soldiers, mutilated or otherwise, how to make bead necklaces. These are really beautiful and are another of her own inventions. Mme. Balli has sold hundreds of these necklaces. The men receive a percentage of the profits and will have an ample purse when they leave the hospital. Another portion goes to buy delicacies for their less fortunate comrades.

"It is doubtful if any of these men who survive and live to tell tales of the great war in their old age will ever omit to recall the gracious presence and lovely face of Mme. Balli, who came so often to make them forget the sad monotony of their lives, even the pain in their mutilated limbs, the agony behind their disfigured faces, during those long months they spent in the hospitals of Paris. And although her beauty has always been a pleasure to the eye, perhaps it is now for the first time paying its great debt to nature."

The Silent Army of Women.

A contrasting picture of another kind of necessary work performed by women was presented to Mrs. Atherton casually by Mme. Paquin. The famous dressmaker's home is in the beautiful suburb of Neuilly, past which in the early mornings creak the great wagons on their way from outlying gardens and orchards to the Paris markets. Mobilization took place on Sunday, and when early Monday morning Mme. Paquin heard the familiar rumble, just as though all the men had not left, she sprang to her window to look out.

"There in the dull gray mist of the early morning," narrates Mrs. Atherton, "she saw the familiar procession. There were the big trucks drawn by the heavily built cart horses and piled high with the abundant but precisely picked and packed produce of the market gardens. Paris was to be fed as usual. People must eat, war or no war. In spite of the summons which had excited the brains and depressed the hearts of a continent, those trucks were playing their part in human destiny, not even claiming the right to be five minutes late.

"The only difference was that the seats on this gloomy August morning of 1914 were occupied by large, stolid peasant women, the wives and sisters and sweethearts of the men called to the colors. They had mobilized themselves as automatically as the Government had ordered out its army when the German war god deflowered our lady of peace.

"These women may have carried heavy hearts under their bright coifs and cotton blouses, but their weather-beaten faces betrayed nothing but the stoical determination to get their supplies to the Halles at the usual hour. And they have gone by every morning since. Coifs and blouses have turned black, but the hard, brown faces betray nothing, and they are never late.

"Up in the Champagne district, although many of the vineyards were in valleys between the two contending armies, the women undertook to care for the vines when the time came, risking their lives rather than sacrifice the next year's vintage. Capt. Sweeney of the Foreign Legion told me that when the French soldiers were not firing they amused themselves watching these women pruning and trimming as fatalistically as if guns were not thundering east and west of them, shells singing overhead.

"For the most part they were safe enough, and nerves had apparently been left out of them; but once in a while the Germans would amuse themselves raking the valley with guns. Then the women would simply throw themselves flat and remain motionless—sometimes for hours—until 'Les Boches' concluded to waste no more ammunition.

"Business as Usual" in Rheims.

"In Rheims the women have never closed their shops. They have covered their windows with sandbags, and by the light of lamp or candle do a thriving business while the big guns thunder.

"The Mayoress of a small town near Paris told me of three instances that came within her personal observation and expressed no surprise at one or the other. One was of a woman whose husband had been a wage earner and with six or eight children had been unable to save anything. The allocation (the Government allowance) was not declared at once, and this woman lost no time bewailing her fate or looking about for charitable groups of ladies to feed her with soup. She simply continued to run her husband's wine shop, and as the patronage was necessarily diminished was one of the first to apply when munition factories invited women to fill the vacant places of men.

"She chose to work at night that she might keep the wine shop open by day for the men too old to fight and for the rapidly increasing number of 'reformés'; those who had lost a leg or arm or were otherwise incapacitated for service.

"A sister, who lived in Paris, immediately applied for one of the thousand vacant posts in bakeries, cut bread and buttered it and made toast for a tea room in the afternoon and found another job to sweep out stores. This woman had a son still under age, but in training at the front. He had been in the habit of paying her periodical visits, until this woman, already toiling beyond her strength to support her other children, sat down one day and wrote to the boy's commanding officer asking him to permit no more leaves of absence, as the ordeal was too much for both of them.

"When I arrived in Paris in May (1916) a little girl had just been decorated by the President of the republic. Her father, the village baker, had made one of those lightning changes from citizen to soldier and her mother had died a few weeks before. She was an only child. The bakery had supplied not only the village but the neighboring inn, which had been a favorite lunching place for automobilists. Travelling for pleasure stopped abruptly, but as the road that passed the inn was one of the direct routes to the front it still had many hasty calls upon its hospitality.

"Now, breadmaking in France is a science, the work of the expert, not of the casual housewife. The accomplished cook of the inn knew no more about mixing and baking bread than he did of washing clothes, and there was but this one bakery, hitherto sufficient, for the baker and his wife had been strong and industrious. The inn was in despair. The village was in despair. A Frenchman will go without meat, but life without bread is unthinkable.

"No one thought of the child.

"It is possible that in her double grief she did not think of herself—for twenty-four hours. But the second day after mobilization her shop window was piled high with loaves as usual. The inn was supplied. The village was supplied. This little girl worked steadily and unaided at her task until her father a year later returned minus a leg to give her assistance of a sort.

"The business of the bakery was nearly doubled during that time. Automobiles containing officers, huge camions with soldiers packed like coffee beans, foot weary marching regiments with no time to stop for a meal, halted a moment and bought the stock on hand. But with only a few hours sleep the girl toiled on valiantly, and no applicant for bread was turned empty handed from the now famous bakery.

"How she kept up her childish strength and courage without a moment's change in her routine, and on insufficient sleep, can only be explained by the twin facts that she came of hardy peasant stock and, like all French children, no matter how individual, was too thoroughly imbued with the discipline of 'the family' to shirk for a moment the particular task that war had brought her."

Women Munition Makers.

Of all the stories of women's part in the war, those which amaze Americans the most, perhaps, are the ones which recount their prowess at munition making. Mrs. Atherton tells that a manager of one of the Paris munition factories first employed women workers with the deepest misgiving.

"Those seeking positions," she narrates, "were just the sort of women he would have rejected if the sturdy women of the farms had applied and given him any choice. They were girls or young married women who had spent all the working years of their lives stooping over sewing machines, sunken chested workers in artificial flowers, confectioners, florists, waitresses, clerks. One and all looked on the verge of a decline, with not an ounce of reserve vitality for work that taxed the endurance of men.

"But, as they protested that they not only wished to support themselves instead of living on charity, but were passionately desirous of doing their bit while their men were enduring the dangers and privations of active warfare, and as his men were being withdrawn daily for service at the front, he made up his mind to employ them and refill their places as rapidly as they collapsed.

"He took me over his establishment and showed me the result. It was one of the astonishing examples, not only of the grim courage of women under pressure, but of that nine lived endowment of the female, in which the male can never bring himself to believe save only when confronted by practical demonstration.

"The women had high chests and brawny arms. They tossed thirty and forty pound shells from one to the other as they once may have tossed a cluster of artificial flowers. Their skins were clean and often ruddy. Their eyes were bright. They showed no sign whatever of overwork. They were almost without exception the original applicants.

"I asked the superintendent if there were no danger of heart strain. He said there had been no sign of it so far. Three times a week they were inspected by women doctors appointed by the Government, and any little disorder was attended to at once. But not one had been ill a day. Those that had suffered from chronic dyspepsia, colds and tubercular tendency were now as strong as if they had lived their lives on farms. It was all a question of plenty of fresh air and work that strengthened the muscles of their bodies, developed their chests and gave them stout nerves and long nights of sleep.

Coiffeur, Powder and Overalls.

"As I looked at those bare, heavily muscled arms I wondered if any man belonging to them would ever dare say his soul was his own again. But as their heads are always charmingly dressed (an odd effect surmounting the greasy overalls) and as they invariably powder before filing out at the end of the day's work it is probable that a comfortable reliance may still be placed upon the ineradicable coquetry of the French woman. And the scarcer the men in the future the more numerous no doubt will be the layers of powder.

"I asked one pretty girl if she really liked the heavy, malodorous work, and she replied that making boutonnieres for gentlemen in a florist shop was paradise by contrast, but she was only too happy to be doing as much for France in her way as her brother was in his. She added that when the war was over she should take off her blue linen apron streaked with machine grease once for all, not remain from choice, as many would. But meanwhile it was not so bad. She made ten francs a day. Some of the women receive as high as fifteen. Moreover, they bossed the few men whose brawn was absolutely indispensable and must be retained in the usine at all costs.

"These men took their orders very meekly. Perhaps they were amused. The French are an ironic race. Perhaps they bided their time. But they never dreamed of disobeying those Amazons whose foot the Kaiser of all the Boches had placed on their necks."

One of the greatest of the munition factories is at Lyons, in the buildings of the exposition held shortly before the outbreak of the war.

"Here," says Mrs. Atherton, "not only were thousands of women employed, but a greater variety of classes. The women of the town, unable to follow the army and too plucky to live on charity, had been among the first to ask for work. The directeur beat his forehead when I asked how they behaved when not actually at the machines, but at least they had proved as faithful and skilful as their more respectable sisters."

What One Girl Found to Do.

How one girl who had always lived a sheltered life was quickened so that she found what she could do—and something that no one else had thought of—is told by Mrs. Atherton in the case of Mlle. Javal. This girl, unlike Mme. Balli, was not a member of fashionable Parisian society. She belonged to a family of the upper bourgeoisie, living on inherited wealth, seeing as little as possible of the world beyond her immediate circle of relatives and friends. When the war first came she took but a languid interest in it. Gradually her interest awakened to events outside her own narrow little world. Finally she decided she ought to find something to do. But what?

"While she was casting about for some work in which she might really play a useful and beneficent role," says Mrs. Atherton, "a friend invited her to drive out to the environs of Paris and visit the wretched éclopés, to whom several charitable ladies occasionally took little gifts of cigarettes and chocolate.

"Then at last Mlle. Javal found herself, and from a halting, apprehensive seeker, still weary in mind and limb, she became almost abruptly one of the most original and executive women in France—incidentally one of the healthiest. When I met her some twenty months later she had red cheeks and was the only one of all those women of all classes slaving for France who told me she never felt tired—in fact, felt stronger every day.

"The éclopés in the new adaptation of the word, are men who are not ill enough for the military hospitals and not well enough to fight. They may have slight wounds or temporary affections of the sight or hearing, the effect of heavy colds; or rheumatism, debilitating sore throat or furiously aching teeth; or they may be suffering too severely from shock to be of any use in the trenches.

"There are between six and seven thousand hospitals in France to-day, but their beds are for the severely wounded, or for those suffering from dysentery, fevers, pneumonia, bronchitis, tuberculosis. The large number of the men temporarily out of condition were sent back of the lines, or to a sort of camp outside of Paris, to rest until they were in a condition to fight again.

She Saved the Eclopes.

"If it had not been for Mlle. Javal it is possible that more men than one cares to estimate would never have fought again. The éclopés at that time were the most abject victims of the war. Sooner or later, of course, the Government would have taken them in hand, but meanwhile thousands would have died, or shambled home to litter the villages as hopeless invalids. Perhaps hundreds of thousands is a safer computation, and these hundreds of thousands Mlle. Javal saved for France.

"All that was dormant in Mlle. Javal's fine brain seemed to awake under the horrifying stimulus of that first visit to the wretches herded like animals outside of Paris, where every man thought he was drafted for death and did not care whether he was or not, where, in short, morale, so precious an asset to any nation in time of war, was practically nil.

"The first step was to get a powerful committee together. Mlle. Javal, although wealthy, could not carry through this gigantic task alone. The moratorium had stopped the payment of rents, factories were closed, tenants mobilized. It was growing increasingly difficult to raise money.

"But nothing could daunt Mlle. Javal. To-day there are over 130 éclopé depots in France; two or three are near Paris, the rest in the towns and villages of the war zone. The long barracks are well built, rainproof and draughtproof, but with many windows which are open when possible, and furnished with comfortable beds. In each depot there is a hospital barrack for those that need that sort of rest or care, a diet kitchen, and a fine large kitchen for those that can eat anything and have appetites of daily increasing vigor.

"Another of Mlle. Javal's ideas was to send to the war zone automobiles completely equipped with dental apparatus in charge of a competent dentist. These automobiles travel from depot to depot, and even give their services to hospitals where there are no dental installations.

"Other automobiles have a surgeon and the equipment for immediate facial operations; and there are migratory pedicures, masseurs and barbers. So heavy has been the subscription, so persistent and intelligent the work of all connected with this great œuvre, so increasingly fertile the amazing brain of Mlle. Javal, that practically nothing is now wanted to make these Dépôts d'Eclopés perfect instruments for saving men for the army by the hundred thousand. I once heard the estimate of the army's indebtedness placed as high as a million and a half."

Portable Huts a Woman's Work.

Mme. Pierre Goujon is another young Frenchwoman who, up to the great war, led a life of ease and careless happiness. During the first month of the war her husband was killed. The beautiful young woman at once closed her own home, returned to the home of her father—the famous Joseph Reinach—and plunged into work. She has a long list of successful activities to her credit. She was one of the first to provide help for the hordes of poor women so suddenly thrown out of work or left penniless with large families of children.

Then came the refugees from Belgium and the invaded districts of France; and Mme. Goujon formed an organization of widows from among her own circle to help these destitute widows.

It was Mme. Goujon, also, who revived the doll dressing industry. One of her most interesting works is Le Bon Gite, of which the object is to furnish temporary homes for families who have lost their own homes.

"The gardens of the Tuileries," says Mrs. Atherton, "present an odd appearance these days. One sees row after row of little huts, models of the huts the English Society of Friends has built in the devastated Valley of the Marne. Where hundreds of families were formerly living in damp cellars or in the ruins of large buildings wherever they could find a sheltering wall, the children dying of exposure, there are now a great number of these portable huts where families may be dry and protected from the elements, albeit somewhat crowded.

"The object of Le Bon Gite is to furnish these little temporary homes—for real houses cannot be built until the men come back from the war—and these models in the Tuileries Gardens show to the visitor what they can do in the way of furnishing a home that will accommodate a woman and two children for 300 francs ($60).

"It seems incredible, but I saw the equipment of several of these little shelters (which contain several rooms) and I saw the bills. They contained a bed, two chairs, a table, a buffet, a stove, kitchen furnishings, blankets, linen and crockery. There were even window curtains.

All Are Godmothers.

"It is hardly too much to say that every woman in France from noblesse to peasant has her filleul (godson) in the trenches; in many cases when she still has a considerable income in spite of taxes, moratoriums and all the rest of it, she is a marraine on the grand scale and has several hundred. Children have their filleul, correspond with him, send him little presents several times a month and weep bitterly when word comes that he is deep in his last trench.

"Servants save their wages so that when the filleuls of their mistresses come home on their six days leave they can at least provide the afternoon wine and entertain them royally in the kitchen. Old maids, still sewing in their attic for a few sous a day, have found a gleam of brightness for the first time in their sombre lives in the knowledge that they give a mite of comfort or pleasure to some unknown man offering his life in the defence of France and whose letters, sentimental, effusive, playful, almost resign these poor stranded women to the crucifixion of their country.

"Girls who once dreamed only of marrying and living the brilliant life of the femme du monde spend hours daily not only on cheerful letters but knitting, sewing, embroidering, purchasing for humble men who will mean nothing to their future beyond the growth of spirit they unconsciously induced. Poor women far from Paris where, at least, thousands of these permissionnaires linger for a few hours on their way home, toil all night over their letters to men for whom they conceive a profound sentiment but can never hope to see.

"It was Mme. Berard (who was a Miss Dana of Boston) who organized this magnificent spirit into a great œuvre, so that thousands of men could be made happy whom no kindly woman so far had been able to discover."

MME. POINCARE', WIFE OF FRENCH PRESIDENT, SETS WOMEN OF FRANCE AN EXAMPLE IN MINISTERING TO WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

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MRS. GERTRUDE ATHERTON

SUMMER RESORT HUNTING ALMOST A DISEASE

Victims Get No Real Rest but Much Worry by Efforts

"IN the summer time all New Yorkers are divided into three parts," said the man who believed in roof gardens, oracularly, to a friend who was with him at one of his favorite resorts the other day.

"No, not the living, the dead, and those residing on Staten Island," he continued. "The three classes I mean are those who take a vacation in the country, those who take a rest in the city and the perfect resort detectors who do neither.

"The end of August and the first part of September is the time when the third species may be most easily spotted. There for instance"—the roof gardener indicated a tall, thin young man with a brow wrinkled like a washboard who sat at a nearby table anxiously and rapidly scanning a pile of booklets and time tables on the table in front of him—"there is a perfect specimen in the last stages of the disease.

"Unlike other maladies, the victim of this complaint is usually a man or woman in the best of health and spirits. The first symptoms appear about June 1 when he or she is in the best possible condition, having skated all winter and played tennis and golf on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays during the spring. The sufferer is so fit physically about this time that the closed in life of the city becomes irksome in the extreme. He begins to look forward to and plan for his vacation.

"The place he will go to, he decides, must have a fine golf links, well kept tennis court, still or surf bathing, sail boating, canoeing, a little shooting, good fishing, fine roads, well equipped livery stable with riding horses, beautiful scenery, bountiful table, dancing, orchestra, nice people, and perhaps a bowling alley and croquet grounds to help while away the two weeks.

"About this time an enthusiastic friend tells him of some place, say Itchiescratchit, Me., where all these things may be found. He joyously prepares to go there, but along comes another friend who listens glumly to his primrose plans and then asks him, with the air of one doing an unpleasant duty, if he ever heard of the mosquitoes which infest Itchiescratchit.

"Reluctantly the unfortunate eliminates Itchiescratchit as a vacation possibility and turns his attention southward along the coast. After some hesitation he picks out Nantucket, which seems to offer a high percentage of the necessary qualifications without any mosquitoes. Just as he has transferred his affection to this place along comes another conscientious friend who could not sleep a wink if he remained silent and permitted the vacationer to immure himself on the island.

"'Don't go to Nantucket unless you want to come back to the city with fins and gills,' warns this alarmist. 'They feed you nothing but sea food, and after you have been there a week you find yourself walking sidewise like a crab and pinching people instead of shaking hands with them.'

"Disgusted with the coast, the would-be vacationist looks inland to the Berkshires, only to learn that if you want to enjoy yourself in a town where there's something stirring you must be in *The Social Register* or sport a coat of arms, and must also bring enough cash along with you to pay America's share of the war.

"Of course there are nice, homelike farm houses thirteen and one-half miles from a railroad where for $9 a week one may have the privilege of bathing in the brook (downstream) with the cows and playing checkers in the barn with the hired man after he has done the chores, but somehow these sylvan sports do not appeal.

"July has now crept up on the calendar, and our patient is further than ever from a decision. His researches have kept him so busy that he has had no time for his usual tennis or golf, and he is beginning to feel a trifle seedy. He includes in his demands a few hammocks where one may rest in perfect peace, and continues to hunt. Once in a while he hears of a new place which for a time seems to be just what he is looking for, but closer investigation always reveals the fact that the grass on the golf links hasn't been cut recently, or the tennis courts are improperly marked, or the much advertised lake is a mudhole, or the table set resembles that of a German family on one of the meatless days when the baker has also failed to deliver the goods.

"He has that worried look by the time August puts in an appearance, and his tennis arm is rusty and he hasn't got the long golf drive he used so effectively in May. By this time he has combed the coast and country from Maine to Florida and hasn't found Utopia yet. He starts on a second lap, this time scanning individual hotels and boarding houses instead of towns and counties. His appetite is going, and he is putting greater stress than ever on the necessity of hammocks, quiet, and a bed with a real mattress on it—something he had not thought of before as at all necessary for a vacation.

"His friends now begin to be worried about him and tell him he needs that vacation mighty bad. This flusters him more than ever. He neglects his business to read pamphlets and booklets. His sleep is troubled by dreams of surf bathing in Vermont and moose hunting in Connecticut. The end of August approaches and he is in despair, while his physical fitness has entirely departed. It would take him a month to recuperate at the best health resort on earth.

"The crisis comes some time in September. Then he either packs his valise and leaves it to the ticket agent where he'll go or he gives up and resumes his old healthy life. By November 30 he is rounding into good shape again, and by the time the spring months come round he is fit as a cricket. If he is wise he doesn't have a relapse, but if he isn't he goes through the same old round again."

The roof gardenia concluded and beckoned to a waiter with an accustomed finger.

"What does he do if he is wise?" asked his companion.

"Think over that list," answered the oracle. "Did you ever hear of a single place that had all those sports and other qualifications?"

"No," replied the friend after some hesitation.

"Huh," said the New Yorker angrily. "You've got the same eye trouble the perfect resort detector has. You're farsighted and local color blind."